

## The Value of Checklists



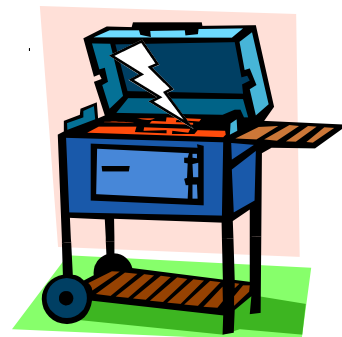
**I**f you've used a grocery list, then you know the value of a checklist and the relief that comes from not having to remember details. Apply this stress-reducing tactic to other areas in your life and watch relief flow. What to do, what to bring, how to do it? Your checklist can be about almost anything—planning a party or social event; preparing for a fishing, camping or boating trip; cleaning and organizational projects; repairing an engine; or baby-proofing a house. To make a checklist, track and record each step as you plan any event that has details associated with it. Use a well-developed checklist to stop the old “Are we forgetting anything?” routine. To help you get started, consider “Checklists for Life: 104 Lists to Help You Get Organized, Save Time, and Unclutter Your Life,” available through online bookstores.

## Fastest Way to Improve Writing Skills



**How well you** write can make or break your business career. For some people, good writing comes naturally, but for others it's a lifelong struggle. Don't stress about this issue any longer. The fastest way to learn is to have what you write corrected by pros. Keep the corrections handy and study them for revelations. Without even trying, you will slowly but surely absorb better writing skills. Cost? About \$25 for 1,000 words. Best way to go: surf the Internet for “proofreading services online.” Consider taking “Writing Documents in Plain Talk” through the Department of Personnel to brush up on your writing skills.

## Yuck—What's on Your BBQ?!



**A**re those pesky flare-ups still hitting your barbecued food? According to research scientist J. Scott Smith of Kansas State University, certain spices may help fight the carcinogenic effects of charred food if they are mixed in with the meat. These three spices are rosemary, turmeric, and fingerroot. When flames hit meat and char food, they create “heterocyclic amines” (HCAs), cancer-causing compounds. These three spices can reduce HCAs up to 40 percent if applied to or mixed with the meat before cooking it.

Source: [www.cancer-health.info](http://www.cancer-health.info), May 20, 2010

## Ecstasy: Hug Drug



**E**cstasy is an illegal drug of abuse with no medical benefits. The popularity of Ecstasy is increasing due to rumors among teenagers about its reputation as a cure-all for shyness, loneliness, or feelings of isolation. Many teenagers would love to be more social or feel more accepted and welcome. Ecstasy's draw as the “hug drug” or “love drug” is seductive to teens who might be tempted by its promises of closeness and acceptance many crave. Fight this dangerous marketing message by reading about Ecstasy so you can impart accurate information to your children. Learn more at [www.DEA.gov](http://www.DEA.gov).

## Getting Your Point Across



**Y**ou may never take a job in “sales,” but you are nonetheless “selling” throughout your career. Getting hired, asking for a raise, persuading others to accept your ideas, or positioning your employer for success—these things all benefit from organizing your thoughts and preparing your pitch like a sales pro. Most people hope for the best without knowing tested “templates” exist for a persuasive presentation. Here’s one approach. Notice how the solution you’re “selling” comes last: 1) State the problem and background information clearly, which presents the unanswered need or the dilemma at hand. 2) Identify the key consequences of the unresolved problem or need—be general. 3) Share your personal account of the negative consequences. 4) Provide more details and actual evidence to support your view and to convince the listener of the seriousness of the problem. Use facts, specifics, the testimony of others as well as anecdotes and opinions of experts. 5) Restate the problem one more time, and offer your solution, an action, or an answer to the problem. To sound like a champ, rehearse your presentation aloud and ask a co-worker to critique it. Keep the above “formula” handy and use it as a tool to advance your career.

## Don't have confidence? Pretend

**I**t sounds sneaky and dishonest, but the catchphrase *Fake It Till You Make It* (FITYMI) is one of the most useful pieces of advice in the business world. The goal of faking it until you make it is not about acting as an imposter. It’s about imitating confidence and energizing yourself to be successful while you wait for real confidence and know-how to develop. Fear of not measuring up to expectations can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. The most famous study of FITYMI asked 50 students to act like they were extroverts, even though none of them had the desire to do so. The more these students faked it, the happier they became, and the more extroverted they *actually* became. Another variation on this same strategy is *bring your body and the mind will follow*. These tactics are well-known for helping alcoholics stay involved in programs like Alcoholics Anonymous until a level of self-motivation is achieved.



## Men and Preventive Health



**M**any preventable illnesses take a toll on the longevity of men’s lives, unfortunately contributing to unattractive statistic that men do not generally live as long as women. Most are lifestyle-related. Although men are less proactive than women when it comes to preventive health care—undoubtedly also part of the reason men lead shorter lives—men’s attitudes are changing for the better according to experts, and the timing is good. Many illnesses that target men in their middle age, including heart disease, diabetes, bowel cancer, gallstones, prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and arthritis are becoming more prevalent. If you’re a man, or if you care about a man, check out the “blueprint” for men’s health at [www.menshealthnetwork.org](http://www.menshealthnetwork.org). You’ll find a comprehensive tally of the things to be targeted for prevention.

Source: [www.menshealthnetwork.org/blueprint/](http://www.menshealthnetwork.org/blueprint/); also check out the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s section on men’s health at [www.cdc.gov/men](http://www.cdc.gov/men).

## Dip into Pool Safety Tips



**T**he American Academy of Pediatrics has some important tips for pool owners to prevent summer tragedies, which includes those with small “blow-up pools” for toddlers. You already know to keep kids from running on wet pool decks, but here are a few you may not have heard. Unfortunately, each has made the list of recommendations the hard way. 1) Don’t allow electrical appliances or extension cords near pools which is easy to do if you are doing yard chores while kids play. 2) After using a blow-up pool, drain it to prevent toddlers who wander back from falling in. 3) Keep toddlers on tricycles or riding toys away from pools so they don’t fall in. Review the complete list and consider a family/friends orientation to remind about pool rules.

Source: [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org).